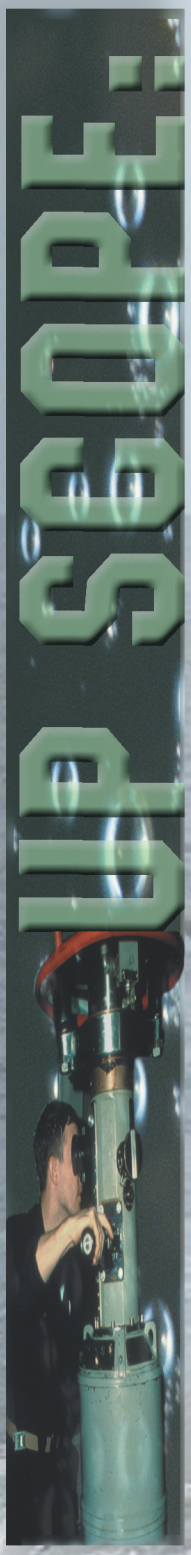
Notes From the World of Submarine Firefighting



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(Editor's note: The below information is summarized from several sources. Damage control assistants, leading chiefs and leading petty officers, and other key damage control personnel should review indicated references for specific information and act accordingly. Sources for the information include: ComSubLant message 131044Z June 2001 (NOTAL); Naval Surface Warfare Center, Ship System Engineering Station Philadelphia message 271600Z June 2001 (NOTAL); and the in-service Engineering Advisory No. 017-01 addressing one-and-a-half-inch fire hose replacement.)

Submarine Firefighting Update

NSTM 555 recommends when fighting a fire aboard a submarine, the backup hose team deploys to the space above or below the fire, depending on where the actual fire is. The backup hose team guards against the fire spreading.

All hands are reminded that most submarine fires originate as electrical fires, where hotwork overheats electrical components. This heat is then conducted and ultimately causes a fire. Less than two percent of submarine fires are caused by a fuel spill, lube oil, or hydraulic systems.

The fire-extinguishing agent used by the reflash watch should be the same agent used to initially extinguish the fire.

What Hose Size Do I Use?

Replacing fire hoses because of normal wear-and-tear and end of equipment-life should be done according to PMS inspection criteria or hydrostatic testing.

The one-and-three-quarter-inch fire hose—in 50-foot lengths—is available through the Navy supply system under Navy Stock Number (NSN) 4210-01-143-1404. The hose uses a one-and-half-inch, NPSH brass coupling so it can connect with existing one-and-half-inch hoses, vari-nozzles, fire plugs, wye-gate valves, and reducer couplings.

New Damage Control Gear

The Naval Sea Systems Command has approved replacing the OBA with the self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). NavSea is now developing necessary ShipAlts to back fit 726- and 21-class submarines.

A more durable thermal imager is scheduled to enter the fleet in about two years.

A hand-held, portable four-gas analyzer is currently being tested and evaluated in the fleet. This device can quickly assess compartmental atmosphere, display the concentration of four gases, and provide real-time result displays. It can be programmed with gas limits and alarm setpoints, and the analyzer will supplement the Draeger tube system.

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